

# THE LEADER.

## AN INFIDEL'S CONVERSION.

Rev. James O. Andrew, in a letter many years ago to the late Bishop McKendree, gives the following account of an infidel's conversion. It may inspire new faith in some pious mother, who has been praying for many years for the conversion of her children:

Mr. Howard had been an infidel about twenty years, during which he seldom attended the House of God, insomuch that he observed to me after his conversion, that he had heard but three sermons in six years. The world had been the sole object of his pursuit, and he had succeeded in amassing a considerable quantity of its wealth. He was in this situation in the beginning of 1817.

He possessed among a number of other slaves one named Peter, who usually attended to his cattle, and in whom he reposed considerable confidence. Peter had been for many years a faithful member of the Methodist church. Some time in the early part of the above-named year Peter died. When he saw the corpse Mr. Howard was struck with astonishment,—for he had seen him in health, perhaps, only the day before he beheld the lifeless clay,—and exclaimed: "My God! are you dead?"

At that moment, he says, the reflection came into his mind: "Yes, yes, you are dead, but you are happy. But how can this be? If you are happy, I am wrong." He banished the reflection from his mind, but it returned again and again.

At length he resolved to search the Scriptures for himself, and see if there was a sufficiency of cogent reasoning in the Bible to convince him of its truth. He would, during this examination, read no other religious books, nor converse with any religious person, but confined his examination and reading altogether to the Bible.

After thus reading and examining for four or five months, he became fully convinced of the authenticity of the Scriptures. This took place on Sabbath morning, about eleven o'clock. About one o'clock, he sat down and wrote a full recitation of his former principles in a letter to one of his most intimate associates in Deism, requesting him to make it known to his former companions in infidelity, exhorting them to search for themselves.

The next morning called his family together and made known to them the change which had taken place in his mind. He said: "We have all served the devil together, and, if we do not repent, we shall all perish." From that morning he commenced family prayer.

Comparing his life with the sacred Word, he now began to feel that he was a wretched sinner, and that something more was necessary than a simple admission of the truth of the Scriptures. He felt that he must be born again, and began to cry mightily to God. After being in great distress, he sent out a fortnight, bath morning, and calling together his neighbors, addressed them to this effect: "You who have an interest at a throne of grace, I have collected you together that you may pray for me; and you that do not pray, I wish you to witness the condition of one infidel."

They began to pray about ten o'clock, and continued in prayer till about two, when the Lord spoke peace to his soul, and gave him the witness of his acceptance. Shortly after this he came to Wilmington, and in the presence of his former companions, united with our society, and has ever since seemed to enjoy the life and power of religion.

It may, perhaps, be proper to observe that his mother had been praying for him about forty years; that during all that time she had seen only one of her children converted; but now the Lord gave her to see her whole family gathered into the church in the space of two months.

**SEINO THOTOR WATER.**—The latest number of the Edinburgh Review says: "Currents in the very bed of a river, or beneath the surface of the sea, may be watched, as Mr. Campbell informs us, by an arrangement that smugglers used in the old days. They sunk their contraband cargo when there was an alarm, and they searched for it again by the help of so-called marine telescope. It was nothing more than a mask with a plate of strong glass at the bottom. The man plunged the closed end a few inches below the surface, and put his head into the other end, and then he saw clearly into the water. The glare and confused reflections and refractions from and through the rippled surface of the sea were entirely shut out by this contrivance. Seal hunters still use it. With this simple apparatus the stirring life of the sea bottom can be seen at leisure with great distinctness. So far as this contrivance enables men to see the land under the waves, movements under water closely resemble movements under air. Sea weeds, like plants, bend before the gale; fish, like birds, keep their heads to the stream, and hang poised on their fins; mud clouds take the shape of water clouds in the air, impede light, cast shadows, and take shapes which point out the directions in which currents flow. It is strange, at first, to hang over a boat's side, peering into a new world, and the interest grows. There is excitement in watching big fish swooping, like hawks, out of their sea weed forests after a white fly sunk to the tree tops to tempt them, and the flight that follows is better fun when plainly seen." (Vol. 1, p. 47.) Mr. Campbell suggests plate glass windows in the bottom of a boat. It would bring men and fish face to face; and the habits of the latter could be leisurely watched."

Many persons approve no books but such as are representations of their own opinions; and they read not to have nature reflected on them and so be taught to know and love everything, but to reflect themselves as in a pocket-mirror, and to exchange admiring looks with their own narrow cast of countenance.

Gen. Grant expresses himself as on the whole pleased with his Southern tour. He regretted to find the people in some quarters, however, sullen and inclined to be morose.

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